

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-78. (CANCELED)

79. (NEW) A purified nucleic acid molecule comprising:

(A) a molecule that hybridizes to either strand of a denatured, double-stranded DNA comprising the nucleic acid molecule of SEQ ID NO: 7 under conditions of moderate stringency and that encodes an amino acid racemase activity;

(B) a molecule that is derived by *in vitro* mutagenesis from SEQ ID NO: 7 and encodes an amino acid racemase activity; and/or

(C) a molecule that is degenerate from SEQ ID NO: 7 as a result of the genetic code and that encodes an amino acid racemase activity.

80. (NEW) A recombinant vector that directs the expression of a nucleic acid molecule as claimed in claim 79.

81. (NEW) A host cell transfected or transduced with the vector as claimed in claim 80.

82. (NEW) A kit for detecting a parasite, said kit comprising:

(A) a polynucleotide probe, which hybridizes with the nucleic acid as claimed in claim 79 under moderate stringency; and

(B) reagents to perform a nucleic acid hybridization reaction.